

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application.

1. (currently amended) A method of inhibiting desiccation of cuttings ~~removed from ornamental~~ plants comprising:

treating ~~a~~ ~~an ornamental~~ plant with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide ~~under conditions effective to inhibit~~;

removing a cutting from the treated plant; and

exposing the removed cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said treating, would cause desiccation of the removed cutting,

whereby said treating inhibits desiccation of ~~a~~ the removed cutting from the ornamental plant after the cutting is removed from the ornamental plant.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the ~~ornamental~~ plant.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

~~removing a cutting from the treated ornamental plant and~~

applying a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the removed cutting.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

8. (currently amended) A cutting which has been removed from ~~an ornamental~~ a plant treated with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide, wherein the cutting is characterized by greater resistance to desiccation as compared to a cutting removed from an untreated ~~ornamental~~ plant.

9. (original) The cutting according to claim 8, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

10. (original) The cutting of claim 8, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

11. (original) The cutting of claim 10, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

12. (currently amended) The cutting of claim 8, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

13-17 (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A method of harvesting a cutting from ~~a an~~ ~~ornamental~~ plant comprising:

treating ~~a an~~ ~~ornamental~~ plant with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide and

harvesting a cutting from the treated ~~ornamental~~ plant,
whereby said treating inhibits desiccation of the harvested cutting and enhances the longevity of flower blooms on the harvested cutting.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the ~~ornamental~~ plant.

20. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

23. (original) The method of claim 18 further comprising:
applying a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the harvested cutting.

24. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

25. (currently amended) A method of harvesting a cutting from ~~an~~ ~~ornamental~~ a plant comprising:

harvesting a cutting from ~~a~~ ~~an ornamental~~ plant and
treating the harvested cutting with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide,

whereby said treating inhibits desiccation of the harvested cutting and enhances the longevity of flower blooms on the harvested cutting.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the cutting.

27. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

28. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

29. (currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

30. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

31. (currently amended) A method of inhibiting desiccation of cuttings from ~~ornamental~~ plants comprising:

removing a cutting from ~~a~~ ~~an ornamental~~ plant ~~and~~;
treating the removed cutting with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide; ~~and~~
exposing the removed cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said treating, would cause desiccation of the removed cutting;
whereby said treating inhibits ~~under conditions effective to inhibit~~ desiccation of the removed cutting.

32. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the cutting.

33. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

34. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

35. (currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

36. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

37. (currently amended) A cutting which has been removed from ~~a~~ ~~an~~ ~~ornamental~~ plant, wherein the cutting has been treated with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide and wherein the cutting is characterized by greater resistance to desiccation as compared to an untreated cutting removed from the ~~ornamental~~ plant.

38. (original) The cutting according to claim 37, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

39. (original) The cutting of claim 37, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

40. (original) The cutting of claim 39, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

41. (currently amended) The cutting of claim 37, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

42-74 (canceled)

75. (currently amended) A method of enhancing the longevity of flower blooms on ~~ornamental~~ plant cuttings, the method comprising:

treating ~~a~~ ~~an ornamental~~ plant with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide ~~under conditions effective to enhancing the~~

~~harvesting from the treated plant a cutting that contains at least one flower; and~~

~~exposing the harvested cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said treating, would cause desiccation of the cutting or the at least one flower thereon,~~

~~whereby the cutting exhibits enhanced longevity of flower blooms on cuttings removed therefrom as compared to a cutting that contains at least one flower and is removed from an untreated plant.~~

76. (currently amended) The method of claim 75, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor to the ~~ornamental~~ plant.

77. (original) The method of claim 75, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

78. (original) The method of claim 77, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

79. (currently amended) The method of claim 75, wherein the ~~ornamental~~ plant is a monocot or a dicot.

80. (currently amended) The method of claim 75 further comprising:
~~harvesting a cutting from the treated ornamental plant and~~
applying a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to
the harvested cutting.

81. (currently amended) A method of enhancing the longevity of flower
blooms on ~~ornamental~~ plant cuttings, the method comprising:
~~harvesting from a plant a cutting that contains at least one flower; from~~
~~an ornamental plant and~~
treating the harvested cutting with a hypersensitive response elicitor
protein or polypeptide; and
~~exposing the harvested cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said~~
~~treating, would cause desiccation of the cutting or the at least one flower thereon,~~
~~whereby said treating imparts to the harvested cutting enhanced under~~
~~conditions effective to enhancing the longevity of flower blooms on the as compared to an~~
~~untreated harvested cutting.~~

82. (currently amended) The method of claim 81, wherein said treating
comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor to the ~~ornamental~~ plant.

83. (original) The method of claim 81, wherein the hypersensitive response
elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

84. (original) The method of claim 83, wherein the plant pathogen is
selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*,
Clavibacter, and *Phytophthora*.

85. (currently amended) The method of claim 81, wherein the ~~ornamental~~
plant is a monocot or a dicot.

86. (new) The method according to claim 1, wherein the plant is a
floriculture crop.

87. (new) The cutting according to claim 8, wherein the plant is a
floriculture crop.

88. (new) The method according to claim 18, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

89. (new) The method according to claim 25, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

90. (new) The method according to claim 31, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

91. (new) The cutting according to claim 37, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

92. (new) The method according to claim 75, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

93. (new) The method according to claim 81, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.